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Meet the new boss, same as the old boss?

Brian Burke, left, fired by the Toronto Maple leafs on Wednesday, has been replaced by his assistant and longtime protégé Dave Nonis.

PHOTOS: BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES AND CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS; STREETERS COMPILED BY: JESSICA SMITH/METRO

If you build it, someone else will take over. New Leafs GM Dave Nonis says Brian Burke assembled the 'building blocks' of a successful team

The shock of Brian Burke's firing lingered Wednesday after the Maple Leafs stunned the hockey world by axing their GM just days before the opening of training camp and the NHL's lockout-shortened season.

Burke, whose record in Toronto never matched his bombastic style, still had two years and $6 million remaining on the six-year, $18-million contract he signed in November 2008 with promises to return the franchise to its former glory.

But the team's corporate executives appear to have lost their appetite for Burke's bluster, especially as the team's on-ice fortunes continued to sag.

Burke will be replaced by Dave Nonis, his assistant and longtime protégé, on an interim basis. Nonis, 46, also replaced Burke nine years ago to become general manager of the Vancouver Canucks following an ownership change in that organization.

"We're not going to spend a lot of time grieving.... We have things to do," said Nonis, who called Burke a "friend" and "mentor," and praised the work of his predecessor to assemble the "building blocks" of a successful team.

Saying the change in leadership was about looking for "a different voice," rather than a change in team philosophy, MLSE president Tom Anselmi said the decision was months in the making.

"The news is coming as a shock, but the decision didn't happen overnight," he said.

It was suggested at Wednesday's press conference that MLSE's new leadership simply didn't like Burke's aggressive style and persona.

"Brian had a style and we knew what we were getting into when he was brought in," Anselmi said, adding, however, that there are now "sober second thoughts" on Burke's tenure.

"Did the four years of missing the playoffs factor into the discussion with the shareholders? Sure it did ..."

Anselmi said Burke's firing had nothing to do with rumours about a potential trade with the Vancouver Canucks for goalie Roberto Luongo. He also said Burke would stay on in the organization as a senior adviser. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Not there yet

"People will look back in four or five years from now and realize that Brian Burke did the work that led to success."

Dave Nonis, Maple Leafs' new GM

MORE LEAFS COVERAGE ON PAGES 5 & 28

Shock and optimism from fans

Douglas Hurst, bartender at The Miller Tavern on Bay Street, across from the ACC

"It was very surprising, shocking. I felt bad because I know this guy as a regular coming in here and he's the sweetest, nicest, most normal guy.

Jackie Fyall, commuter and Leafs fan

"I was shocked. I didn't think it would happen this year, with the short year. I thought they'd let him stick it out for this half-season. But I'm not totally disappointed, not totally unhappy.

Fredrick Mezi, hotdog vendor near ACC

"All these American teams are winning the Stanley Cup, when's it Canada's turn? But Brian Burke — I don't think it's his fault. It's the hockey stars: They've got to work together. Just like the hotdog vendors: We work together, too, you know."

Bryce Heron, line cook at Aria Ristorante

"I was pretty happy about it. I didn't feel like he really did a whole lot during his tenure here.... As far as a GM, I felt he was more here for the money, as opposed to winning a championship."

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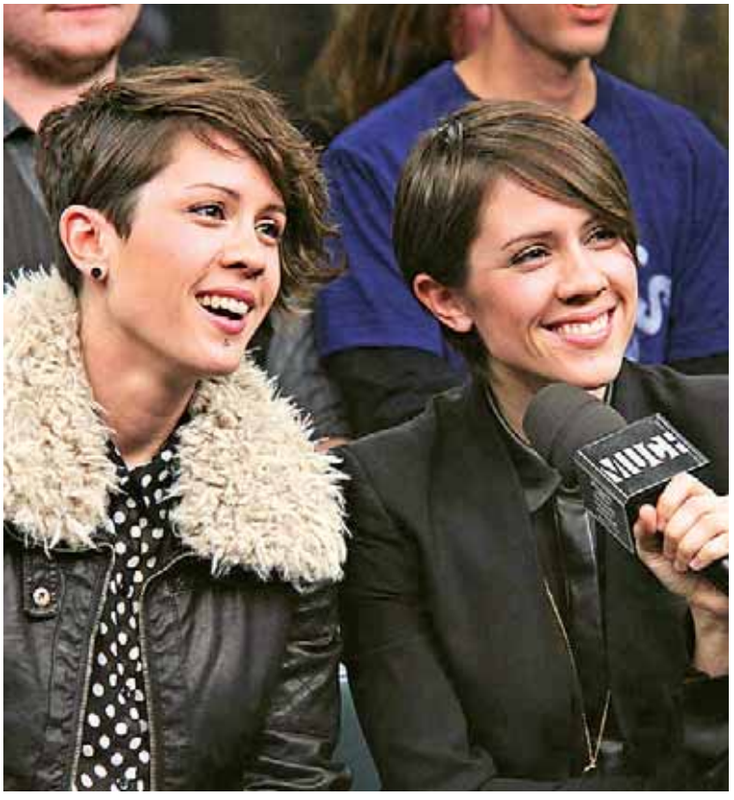

Sisters talk Heartthrob

Indie rock sweethearts Tegan and Sara stopped by MuchMusic HQ Wednesday to chat with NEW.MUSIC.LIVE. host Scott Willats about their new album Heartthrob, their seventh studio album, dropping in stores Jan. 29. The Calgary-born sisters were recently nominated in the Grammy category for best long form music video for their DVD documentary Get Along. PHOTO COURTESY OF MUCHMUSIC

Tax? Toll? Fares? asks Metrolinx

The Big Move. The Ontario agency kicks off a roundtable series next week to let the public discuss its regional transportation plan

It's being billed as the Big Conversation. But it represents a big hope to transit advocates and civic leaders eager for signs the province is prepared to do something politically risky: Imposing taxes dedicated to a massive regional transit expansion. Metrolinx has announced plans for 12 regional roundtables, beginning in Oakville on Tuesday.

They're the first plank in a public engagement process leading up to a June release of the provincial agency's investment strategy — a plan for how the region will raise about $2 billion annually to build the transit improvements prescribed in Metrolinx's The Big Move regional plan.

In announcing the roundtables, though, Metrolinx made no mention of taxes or tolls.

That's because, more than four years after Metrolinx released The Big Move, the public still doesn't understand it, said Dina Graser, director of community and stakeholder relations.

"Of course (the roundtables) will talk about the need for transportation investment, but they're also really about getting people to understand not just who Metrolinx is, but what is The Big Move.... People need to understand what they're paying for before you get into the conversation of how you're paying for it." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Commitment

The province has committed about $16 billion toward various projects in the $50-billion, 25-year plan. But taxes, tolls and other fees will be needed to get the remaining projects moving and keep gridlock from stunting the region's economy.

Porter Airlines

Workers who fuel aircraft threaten to go on strike

Porter Airlines says it will provide regular service despite a strike by employees who fuel the aircraft.

Twenty-two workers were set to go on strike Thursday at 12:01 a.m. after talks broke down with the airline Wednesday. Although the company said it has other trained employees to fuel the aircraft, the union representing the workers said it was concerned that the replacements do not have the skills to do the job properly.

The Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union says it will take those concerns, which include safety concerns, to federal Labour Minister Lisa Raitt.

"There will be zero impact on the business. All flights will operate," Porter spokesman Brad Cicero said of the operations at Billy Bishop Airport in Toronto. "We have a full team of staff available ... all fully trained and ready to go."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'It's an epidemic'

Mississaugans' top worry — speeders

The number one complaint in Mississauga today is speeding. According to city councillors, that's the problem they hear about most from residents.

"It's an epidemic," Coun. Sue McFadden said. On Wednesday, councillors voted to reduce the speed limit on one residential street. But there are hundreds more, they say, that need it. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto Animal Services

Accused dog strangler can't be trusted: Judge

Bolton's accused dog strangler has been denied bail and will be held in a Toronto jail awaiting trial.

Police say Rita Mueller, 50, killed a Shar-Pei named Henry in August 2012 by hanging it from two leashes at the Toronto Animal Services facility on Shepherd Ave. W. At her hearing Wednesday, Justice of the Peace David Hunt said Mueller can't be trusted to stay away from animals if she is released. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rita Mueller HANDOUT

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Terminal cancer

Pair face desperate days with no mom

Amanda Gray will always remember the date: Oct. 22, 2012.

"It's the sort of thing you remember," she says. "That was when they told us she had three months to live."

Her mother, Kimberley Watzl, has advanced cervical cancer. Amanda, 20, counted the months in her head and landed on the date her mom was supposed to die: Jan. 22, 2013.

Now, as that date grows nearer, Amanda and her brother, Jamal, 14, face an uncertain future. Since their only income is their mother's Ontario Disability Support Program payments, they fear they will not be able to fend for themselves or afford a proper burial.

They have no other family in Toronto. Amanda applied for custody of her brother and won.

The siblings want their mom to be buried in a cemetery just a 10-minute bus ride from their apartment at Oakwood and St. Clair. But the social-assistance area there is full, meaning it's likely she'll be buried at a location further away.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Liberals warn teachers will be breaking law with protest

Labour strife. But union insists one-day rally is protected under Charter

Premier Dalton McGuinty says elementary school teachers who have announced a one-day protest Friday will be taking part in an illegal strike.

McGuinty says the teachers are no longer in a legal strike position now that the province has imposed new collective agreements.

Tens of thousands of Ontario elementary teachers and education workers — including the Toronto District School Board — are set to participate in a one-day political protest Friday over the government's decision to impose the contracts.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) says it's following through on what the majority of its 76,000 members said they wanted should contracts be forced on them.

Education Minister Laurel Broten urged union leaders Wednesday not to ask teachers to break the law.

The minister wouldn't say what kind of penalties striking teachers may face, saying it's up to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

The ETFO insists it's not a strike, but a one-day political protest that's protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"This has nothing to do with revenge or anger," ETFO president Sam Hammond said Wednesday. "This has to do with principled positions in terms of democracy."

But Broten said teachers are not allowed to walk out of class, since they're no longer in a legal strike position.

The union had offered a truce to the Liberals, promising to hold off on any action if they didn't use their controversial anti-strike law to force new contracts before a new premier is chosen Jan. 26.

Instead, Broten imposed collective agreements Jan. 3 on 126,000 public school educators, which cut their benefits and froze most of their wages to battle the province's $14.4-billion deficit.

Teachers may demonstrate outside schools, politicians' offices or decide on another location. There are no plans for further protests, but Hammond said he's not ruling anything out. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Potential consequences

- Engaging in illegal strike activity can carry a penalty of up to $2,000 per person and $20,000 for a trade union, according to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.
- They would only be fined if the board determined it was an unlawful strike, gave consent to prosecute and a court agreed with the board's finding.

A drum circle leads students, teachers and supporters as they take part in an Idle No More rally at the University of Ottawa on Wednesday. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The League

Fantasy sports channel wins CRTC approval

Fight Media Inc. has been given approval to operate a fantasy sports TV channel, allowing viewers to create, trade and discuss players on imaginary teams.

The CRTC approved the application for a broadcast licence to operate The League specialty channel. THE CANADIAN PRESS

National Parole Board

Serial con artist back behind bars

One of Canada's most notorious con artists is back behind bars for a little longer. The National Parole Board has revoked the statutory release of Michael Lee Mitton, a serial fraudster with GTA connections and more than 100 convictions, until at least June. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Michael Lee Mitton RCMP

Brian Burke an unlikely advocate for LGBT rights

Getting tough in 'a macho workplace.'

Late son inspired former Leafs GM to fight homophobia

Quoted

"Families, certainly across North America, owe him a debt of gratitude."

Irene Miller, president of PFLAG's Toronto chapter, on Brian Burke's dedication to fighting homophobia

The name Brian Burke is inextricably linked to sport in this city — but the now-suddenly former general manager of the Maple Leafs was not just a hockey man.

One of the most recognized faces in the NHL had also become a familiar one at numerous community and charitable events, mostly in support of the LGBT community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender).

The tough-talking, self-described gruff Burke may have seemed an unlikely advocate, but it was his late son Brendan — a former goalie for the Miami (Ohio) University hockey team who came out as gay in 2009 — who inspired Burke to take up the cause.

Acknowledging that the NHL was "still very much a macho workplace," in the last few years Burke made numerous high-profile appearances on behalf of gay rights, speaking for organizations like Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in the aim of eliminating homophobia in sport and in society.

He participated in numerous PRIDE parades, first alongside Brendan, then — following a fatal car crash in Indiana in February 2010, just months after he came out publicly — in honour of him.

Last year, Burke was honoured with the Ally Award by PFLAG for being a community leader dedicated to fighting homophobia and bullying.

As Toronto journalist Ivor Tossell noted on Twitter shortly after Burke's firing was announced, the former GM went to city hall in 2011 to help raise the rainbow flag.

"Only a scattered few were there," Tossell wrote, noting that among the absent was Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. "But Brian Burke was there. Next year, everybody came."

Irene Miller, the president of PFLAG's Toronto chapter, said Wednesday that Burke's LGBT advocacy has made a "tremendous difference."

"He threw open the door to the locker-room, into the sports world, and that was something that had been a long time coming, and it was a very brave thing, not just for Brian to do but for Brendan to have done," Miller said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brian Burke walks with his wife, Jennifer, during the Gay Pride Parade in downtown Toronto in July 2010. Burke has become a familiar face at charitable events in support of the LGBT community. VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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Botched probe must spark change: Lawyer

Soldier suicide. Investigation designed to absolve military, argues retired colonel

The pain endured by the family of an Edmonton soldier who killed himself should be used as a springboard for changes to the treatment of veterans and their loved ones, the family's lawyer said Wednesday.

The investigations into the 2008 suicide of Cpl. Stuart Langridge were handled in an inept manner, retired colonel Michel Drapeau told the Military Police Complaints Commission hearing.

After eight months of work and 92 witnesses, the hearing ended Wednesday, with Drapeau and lawyers for the government pressing their cases for a final time.

The public interest hearing was convened following complaints from Langridge's family that the investigation into their son's death was biased and designed to absolve the military.

Unimpressed

"It has created an extra layer of pain ... that was preventable ... had a modicum of transparency, accountability and basic compassion been displayed."

Retired colonel Michel Drapeau on investigations into the suicide of Cpl. Stuart Langridge

Langridge, a veteran of Afghanistan and Bosnia, hanged himself in March 2008 following treatment for drug and alcohol addiction in a civilian hospital.

The inquiry heard how military police concealed Langridge's suicide note from his parents for 14 months, claiming it was evidence in a suspicious-death probe.

The National Investigation Service has acknowledged it mishandled the note and has improved its procedures since, said Korinda McLaine, lawyer for the federal government.

"Although it may be tempting to look back on the investigations with the perfect lens of hindsight, that would not be fair to the subjects in this complaint," she said.

There were also conflicting claims about whether the troubled soldier was on a suicide watch prior to his death. If so, the military would have been liable for his death.

The inquiry also heard how the final military police report into the death was heavily rewritten and censored.

All of this was to protect the military, not respect Langridge or his family, Drapeau said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Hearing date set. Alleged murderer Luka Magnotta returns to the courtroom

A shackled Luka Rocco Magnotta remained impassive as he made his first court appearance since last June on a first-degree murder charge in the gruesome slaying of a Montreal university student.

Lawyers set the stage on Wednesday for a preliminary hearing beginning March 11.

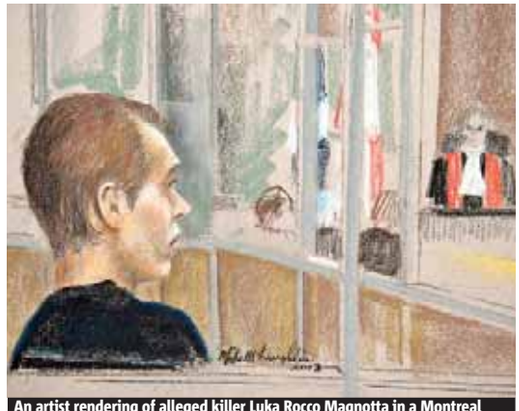
The hearing, which will determine whether the 30-year-old Ontario native is sent to trial, is scheduled to last at least two weeks and possibly resume in June.

Magnotta is charged with first-degree murder in the slaying and dismemberment of Chinese engineering student Jun Lin last May.

Most of the contents of Wednesday's 35-minute hearing cannot be revealed because of a publication ban.

Magnotta faces other charges: Committing an indignity to a body; publishing obscene material; criminally harassing Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other members of Parliament; and mailing obscene and indecent material.

He is accused of mailing Lin's body parts to different places, including the Ottawa offices of the Conservative Party of Canada, the Liberal Party of Canada and two Vancouver schools. THE CANADIAN PRESS



An artist rendering of alleged killer Luka Rocco Magnotta in a Montreal court on Wednesday. MIKE MCLAUGHLIN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Walkerton strain

E. coli outbreak travels to Ontario from Maritimes

Ontario's Ministry of Health says an E. coli outbreak that's already sickened people in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has also made itself felt closer to home.

Ministry spokesman David Jensen says there are four confirmed cases of E. coli in the province, adding the patients became ill in late December.

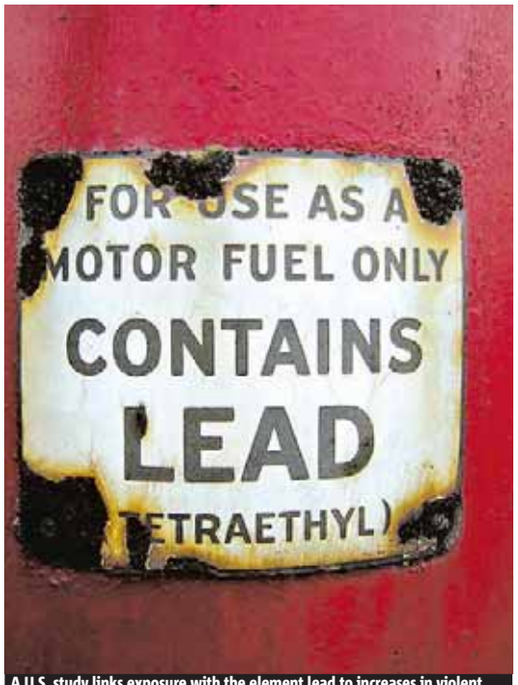
He says lab tests have confirmed the cases are linked to others in the Maritimes, adding the strain of E. coli is somewhat rare.

Officials in Nova Scotia have reported 10 cases of E. coli, while six cases have been documented in New Brunswick.

The strain of E. coli reported in those provinces is the same one found in the Walkerton water disaster in 2000 that killed seven people.

Symptoms of the gastrointestinal illness include severe cramps, bloody diarrhea and vomiting.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



A U.S. study links exposure with the element lead to increases in violent behaviour. WIKI COMMONS

Link made between lead exposure and violent crime

Study. Findings say exposure attacks the brain's neuron connections, causing lower IQ, Attention Deficit Disorder and aggression

It's in your lipstick, pencil and front garden, and scientists now claim to have proven that the metal element lead causes violent crime. Wide-ranging research into a "public health catastrophe" showed people exposed to lead as children are more likely to offend as adults.

Using data from 90 U.S. cities since the 1950s, researchers at the University of Tulane, New Orleans, found that violent crime rates mirrored lead emissions.

They rose sharply around 20 years after the introduction of leaded gasoline and began to fall the same interval after it was phased out in the 1970s.

Crime rates remained high only in cities where emissions remained high. The correlation also applied at a neighbourhood level and the data is even being used by local police forces.

Researchers balanced the findings against social factors such as income, education and race, but the results remained consistent. The research was "carefully controlled," said independent toxicologist Professor Alastair Hay of the University of Leeds, who was "convinced" by the conclusion.

KIERON MONKS/METRO WORLD NEWS

It's everywhere

Lead can be found in many forms around the home, including:

- **Walls**: Homes built before 1980 commonly used lead paint.
- **Containers**: Pottery and crystal, especially from Latin America, can be lead-glazed.
- **Soil**: Contains trace lead and concentration is higher in urban areas.
- **Computers**: Your average PC contains numerous metals (including lead), eight of which are listed as hazardous.

Lotto win fallout

Wife of slain U.S. lottery winner questioned

Chicago police investigating the mysterious cyanide death of a lottery winner questioned his wife for more than four hours and executed a search warrant on their home.

Shabana Ansari's attorney, Steven Kozicki, says Ansari was subjected to a long session of questioning at a police station in November and that detectives searched the home.

Ansari would not talk about the circumstances of her husband's death, saying it was too painful to recall. She said only that he fell ill shortly after they ate dinner together. Khan died just days before he was to collect $425,000 in lottery winnings.

Authorities initially ruled the death a result of natural causes, but further tests showed he was poisoned and his death was reclassified as a homicide.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Get your bling

Duffel bags full of jewelry a headache for N.Y. police

A pile of jewelry among the mass of seized stolen goods. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police in upstate New York face a daunting task in finding owners for jewelry and other valuables discovered stuffed into 31 duffel bags.

Few clues point to the owners of the roughly 30,000 items discovered after 39-year-old John Suddard's recent arrest. So police in the village of Hudson Falls near the Vermont border are taking the novel step of displaying the items at the local high school Wednesday night.

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No Governor General? No meeting: Chief Spence

Hunger strike. First Nations leader calls on Queen to help get David Johnston in Friday meeting

Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence abruptly changed her mind Wednesday, refusing to attend Friday's hard-won First Nations meetings with the federal government because Gov. Gen. David Johnston isn't planning to be there.

Spence — whose month-long protest on Victoria Island was predicated on winning a meeting with both Johnston and Prime Minister Stephen Harper — said she's written to Buckingham Palace to enlist the help of the Queen.

Social-media speculation that Johnston might change his mind was scotched Wednesday afternoon by a spokesperson for Rideau Hall: "As previously stated, the Governor General will not attend Friday's meeting. This has not changed."

Spence has been camped out on an island in the Ottawa River since Dec. 11, subsisting solely on fish broth and medicinal tea in hopes of convincing Harper and Johnston to sit down with First Nations leaders to discuss historical treaty rights.

Spence wants Johnston present at the meetings because the talks are supposed to focus on the treaty rights that were established by the Royal Proclamation of 1793, issued by King George III.

"We have sent a letter to Buckingham Palace, requesting that Queen Elizabeth II send forth her representative, which is the Governor General of Canada," she said in a statement.

A spokesperson for Johnston has said he would not attend the sessions on Friday because the gathering is a working meeting with government on public policy issues.

The precise issues have yet to be defined. Some clarity was expected Wednesday from Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, but that news conference was rescheduled for Thursday shortly after Spence pulled out. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Idle No More

Enlisting social media

Social media has become a teaching tool for many, and one Alberta student is delving into how it can help teach and inspire an entire culture into action.

University of Alberta Native Studies student Kirsten Lindquist has launched a research project that looks at the role social media plays in Indigenous scholars' work, but has also been following the Idle No More movement with great interest.

Lindquist said that social media, particularly Twitter, has helped Idle No More spread across the country by making it more accessible and relatable to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons. LAURIE CALLSEN/METRO

Killer whales fight for their lives in northern Quebec

Orcas surface for air in a small hole in the ice near Inukjuak, Que., on Wednesday. The community, in Quebec's Far North, wants Ottawa to deploy an icebreaker to free about a dozen of the whales cornered under a vast stretch of sea ice. Locals say the mammals have gathered around one hole in the ice — slightly bigger than a pickup truck — in their desperate bid to get oxygen. Mayor Peter Inukpuk believes a sudden drop in temperature recently caught the pod off guard, leaving them boxed in under the ice.

MARINA LACASSE, HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hudson Bay. Stranded hunters rescue rescuers from sinking helicopter

Two seal hunters who were stranded on an ice floe near the west shore of Hudson Bay ended up rescuing their rescuer.

Capt. Jill Strelieff with 1 Canadian Air Division says the rescue helicopter landed on the ice floe, but because of its weight, it broke through the ice.

She says the two hunters pulled the pilot out of the partially submerged helicopter.

Then two search and rescue technicians parachuted down from a Hercules to help the three.

A Griffon helicopter from Cold Lake, Alta., transported the hunters, the pilot and the two search and rescue technicians to Arviat, Nunavut.

Mounties say the hunters and the pilot are being treated for hypothermia and their injuries are not as bad as first feared. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Worthy investment. Poll shows Canadian support for arts and culture

An overwhelming majority of Canadians believe arts and culture is worthy of government support, according to the results of a poll commissioned by Canadian Heritage.

When asked: "How much importance do you think governments in Canada should place on supporting arts and culture in Canada?" 39 per cent chose "a great deal," while 48 per cent chose a "moderate amount." Nine per cent said "not very much" and three per cent responded "no importance at all." THE CANADIAN PRESS

National poll

57

About 57 per cent of Canadians polled said they were personally involved in an artistic activity during the past 12 months.

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Mideast. Severity of storm shocks region

The fiercest winter storm to hit the Mideast in years brought a rare foot of snow to Jordan on Wednesday, caused fatal accidents in Lebanon and the West Bank and disrupted traffic on the Suez Canal in Egypt. At least eight people died across the region.

In Lebanon, the Red Cross said storm-related accidents killed six people over the past two days. Several drowned after slipping into rivers from flooded roads. One person froze to death and another died after his car went off a slippery road.

In the West Bank town of Ramallah, a Palestinian official said two women drowned after their car was caught in a flash flood on Tuesday.

In the Gaza Strip, civil defence spokesman Mohammed al-Haj Yousef said storms cut electricity to thousands of Palestinian homes and rescuers were sent to organize evacuations.

The weather hit Syrian refugees in tent camps very hard. Torrential rains over four days have flooded some 200 tents and forced women and infants to evacuate in temperatures that dipped below freezing.

Jordanian weatherman Mohammed Samawi called it the "fiercest storm to hit the Mideast in the month of January in at least 30 years."

MENA also reported 10 fishermen missing after their boat capsized off Egypt in the Mediterranean. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Refugees

50,000

The unusual weather hit Syrian refugees living in tent camps very hard, particularly some 50,000 sheltering in the Zaatari camp in Jordan's northern desert.

A Lebanese man clears snow in front of his shop at the mountain town of Bhamdoun, Lebanon, on Wednesday. BILAL HUSSEIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Second World War

Soldier's duffel bag returned 7 decades later

A U.S. man who served in France during the Second World War has been reunited with his army duffel bag nearly 70 years after it went missing.

William Kadar opened a carefully wrapped package Tuesday to find the bag, still stenciled with his name and serial number.

The 92-year-old Kadar tells the Post-Tribune in Indiana that he last saw the bag in November 1944, a month before he was captured by the Germans.

His granddaughter says a 16-year-old French boy found the bag in his grandfather's house. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Family takes to sea to escape wildfires

South Australia. Milder temperatures reduce danger, but scores of blazes still burn

Record temperatures across southern Australia cooled Wednesday, reducing the danger from scores of raging wildfires, but likely bringing only a brief reprieve from the summer's extreme heat and fire risk.

Australia had its hottest day on record Monday with a nationwide average of 40.33 C. Four of Australia's hottest 10 days occurred in 2013. "If you look at its extent, its duration, its intensity, it is arguably the most significant in Australia's history," said David Jones, with the Bureau of Meteorology.

No deaths have been reported from wildfires, but around 100 people haven't been accounted for since a blaze destroyed about 90 homes in Dunalley, Tasmania.

Survivors have told stories of swirling flames, toxic fumes and desperate escapes. Tim Holmes fled his burning home near Dunalley on Friday with his wife, Tammy, and five grandchildren, aged two to 11, and took shelter in the sea beneath a wooden jetty.

"The difficulty was there was so much smoke and embers and there was probably eight to 12 inches of air above the water," Holmes told Australian Broadcasting Corp. television. "So we were all just heads; water up to our chins just trying to breathe because it was just — the atmosphere was so incredibly toxic," he added. The fires have been most devastating in Tasmania, where at least 128 homes and more than 80,000 hectares have burned. Hundreds of people remain at evacuation centres. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tammy Holmes, second from left, and her grandchildren take refuge under a jetty as a wildfire rages nearby in the Tasmanian town of Dunalley, Australia, on Jan. 4. TIM HOLMES/HOLMES FAMILY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A building burns near a jetty where Tim and Tammy Holmes attempt to shelter their five grandchildren from fire. TIM HOLMES/HOLMES FAMILY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Destruction

Firefighters were battling around 200 fires across Australia's southeast. The risk from fire is expected to increase later in the week as temperatures again rise.

- **Victoria.** A fire injured six people, destroyed nine homes and caused the evacuation of a farming community.
- **New South Wales.** Firefighters were battling 141 fires, including 31 that had not yet been contained.

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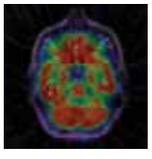

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Ride down Russian ski slope inside zorb ends in death

Denis Burakov, left, inside the large plastic ball called a zorb, with another man. PROVIDED BY YEKATERINA ACHKASOVA /APTN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Burakov and another man inside the zorb, on Jan. 3 as they roll down a hill before tragedy struck. PROVIDED BY YEKATERINA ACHKASOVA /APTN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On video. Giant plastic ball flies off course, killing man and leaving friend badly injured

It was supposed to be a thrilling ride down a ski slope inside a giant inflatable ball that is to be one of the symbols of next year's Winter Olympics; it ended in tragedy for the two Russian men inside.

The transparent plastic ball — known as a zorb — veered off course and sailed over a rock ledge in the rugged Caucasus Mountains of southern Russia. The ball picked up speed as it flew down the steep slope, rolling and bouncing. One man was killed and the other badly injured.

The man who died, 27-year-old Denis Burakov, was with friends at the Dombai ski resort, where they frequently went snowboarding, on Jan. 3 when he decided to take a ride in a zorb being operated next to a beginners' slope. His friend Vladimir Shcherbakov joined him.

An eight-minute video taken on Burakov's phone by one of his friends shows the two men being fitted into harnesses inside the zorb, which consists of two polyurethane balls with a layer of air between them. The zorb is then released to roll down the hill, the two men spinning inside.

But the zorb bounces off of the intended path, and a man waiting for it at the bottom of the hill tries in vain to catch the ball before it pops over a rocky ledge and disappears down a gorge below Mount Mussa-Achitara.

The person filming the video is heard swearing and asking "What's down there?" The answer from someone off camera: "It's a catastrophe down there." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"The transparency of zorbs also reflect the open, accessible and inclusive society that Sochi 2014 Games is helping to build."

Dmitry Chernyshenko, head of the organizing committee, said in 2010.

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This is what a feminist rules like: Berlusconi

Silvio's hefty divorce settlement. Chief judge says she was 'hurt' by former Italian PM's accusations

Silvio Berlusconi GETTY IMAGES

Former Premier Silvio Berlusconi has infuriated Italy's legal establishment by blasting a group of female magistrates as "feminist" and "communist" for what he said was a $258,000-a-day divorce settlement.

The comments — and the backlash — have added to the drama surrounding Berlusconi's return to public life amid his continued sexual and legal scandals and his new role as the leader of a centre-right coalition campaigning in Italy's Feb. 24-25 election.

Italian media initially reported that Berlusconi's divorce from his second wife, Veronica Lario, would cost him $46 million a year. That breaks down to about $129,000 a day.

But on Tuesday, Berlusconi told the La7 private television network that the amount was much higher. While he didn't detail how he got to a $258,000-a-day figure, he said he was ordered by the Milan magistrates to pay Lario $46.4 million a year, with another $93 million in back payments.

"These are three women judges, feminists and communists, OK?" the three-time ex-premier said. "These are the Milan judges who have persecuted me since 1994."

Berlusconi has long accused Milan prosecutors and magistrates of mounting politically inspired cases against him, and he frequently accuses his legal and political enemies of being communists.

Milan chief judge Livia Pomodoro said Wednesday that she was "surprised and hurt" by the remarks, and "as a woman I am degraded."

In a joint statement, Pomodoro and the head of Milan's appeals court "strongly rejected any insinuation of partiality" by the tribunal's judges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Suspect took photos before attack, court told

Theatre shooting. Police show shots they say Holmes took of Colorado theatre a month before rampage

The suspected gunman in last year's Colorado-theatre shooting used a cellphone to take self-portraits the night of the attack, sticking out his tongue, smiling and posing with a Glock pistol, prosecutors said Wednesday. The judge said he will rule by Friday on whether James Holmes, 25, will stand trial in one of America's worst mass shootings.

The defence decided not to call witnesses to testify about Holmes' mental health at the hearing.

Sgt. Matthew Fyles testified that Holmes wore black contact lenses in one of the photos. In another photo, Holmes holds a black, spherical object that officials described as a pyrotechnic shell used to rig his apartment for an explosion. Protruding from top is a red and white-striped fuse, and it appears that Holmes is blowing it out as if it were a candle.

Another photo shows Holmes' bed. On it is a tactical vest, .223-calibre magazines, pistol magazines, a gas mask, a Glock in a holster, a ballistic helmet, jacket and pants, an assault rifle, a shotgun, a bag that could be used to carry magazines and a carry-all bag. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"He didn't care who he killed or how many ... because he wanted to kill all of them."

Prosecutor Karen Pearson, saying Holmes had picked the perfect venue

Colorado-movie-theatre shooting suspect James Holmes appears in Arapahoe County District Court in Centennial, Colo. in this file photo from last July.

RJ SANGOSTI/DENVER POST/POOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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Gun violence. Obama 'determined to take action,' Biden says

U.S. President Barack Obama is "determined to take action" on gun violence, his vice-president said Wednesday as a high-profile round of White House meetings began in search of new policies after last month's Connecticut school shooting.

Obama hopes to announce his administration's next steps to tackle gun violence shortly after he is sworn in for a second term on Jan. 21.

While Vice-President Joe Biden was meeting with victims' groups and gun-safety organizations ahead of this month's deadline to send proposals to Congress, a contentious debate was emerging on just what gun safety should be.

The governor of New York, the state with some of the country's strictest gun laws, was proposing bans on all assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. The governor of neighbouring New Jersey, Chris Christie, said policymakers also must address the mental-health system and look at the impact of violent video games.

Gabrielle Giffords, the former congresswoman who was shot in the head two years ago in a mass attack, is forming a political-action committee to counter the existing gun lobby while reaching out to gun owners like herself. And states are exploring ideas ranging from instant background checks for people buying ammunition to one Utah town's proposal to have every household armed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gunning for support

A coalition of conservative and gun-rights groups is organizing a Gun Appreciation Day to coincide with the weekend of President Barack Obama's inauguration, calling on people to visit gun stores, gun ranges and gun shows with U.S. flags and "Hands off my gun" signs.

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An Iraqi army soldier, in this 2006 file photo, closes the door of a cell in Abu Ghraib prison on the outskirts of Baghdad after the Iraqi government took over control from U.S. forces. Former inmates at the prison have received compensation from a defence contractor whose subsidiary was accused in a lawsuit of conspiring to engage in torture at Abu Ghraib. KHALID MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraqi prisoners paid millions in torture lawsuit

Abu Ghraib. Military investigation in 2004 identified 44 alleged incidents of detainee abuse at infamous jail

A defence contractor whose subsidiary was accused in a lawsuit of conspiring to torture detainees at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq has paid $5.28 million US to 71 former inmates held there and at other U.S.-run detention sites from 2003 to 2007.

The settlement in the case involving Engility Holdings Inc. marks the first successful effort by lawyers for former prisoners at Abu Ghraib and other detention centres to collect money from a U.S. defence contractor in lawsuits alleging torture. Another contractor, CACI, is expected to go to trial over similar allegations this summer.

The payments were disclosed in a document that Engility filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission two months ago but which has gone essentially unnoticed.

The defendant in the lawsuit, L-3 Services Inc., now an Engility subsidiary, provided translators to the U.S. military in Iraq.

L-3 Services "permitted scores of its employees to participate in torturing and abusing prisoners over an extended period of time throughout Iraq," the lawsuit stated. The company "wilfully failed to report L-3 employees' repeated assaults and other criminal conduct by its employees to the United States or Iraq authorities."

Several inmates said they were raped and many said they were beaten and kept naked for extended periods of time.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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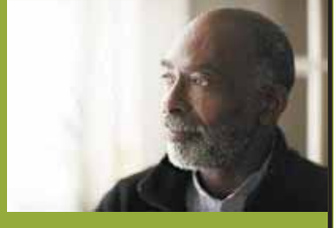
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Lump it! Half of Canucks contribute to RRSPs all at once

March 1 deadline. But stress of saving would be reduced by putting aside smaller sums throughout year, new survey finds

Canadians who are stressed about the annual RRSP deadline are not alone, according to a new study that found 60 per cent of respondents feel anxious about coming up with the money for their retirement savings.

And almost half of respondents to the survey — 49 per cent — who make an annual RRSP contribution do so in a lump sum, said the Bank of Montreal study released Wednesday.

The uneasiness around the March 1 deadline is understandable when Canadians have to deal with other financial priorities, said Marlena Pospiech, senior manager with BMO Wealth Planning Group.

"If they haven't saved regularly it could be really hard, especially coming out of the holiday season and if they have racked up a lot of debt over that time," Pospiech said.

The BMO study also found that 54 per cent of those surveyed would feel less stressed if they made regular RRSP contributions throughout the year to meet the deadline.

BMO said contributing even a small amount — a few hundred dollars — to an RRSP is better than nothing at all. "If they don't have the full amount, that should not stop them from making a contribution," Pospiech said.

"Any little bit helps because of the tax-deferred compound growth. It makes their money work a lot harder for them rather than having it just sitting." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 101.25¢ (-0.10¢)

TSX 12,522.24 (+17.43)

OIL $93.10 US (-5¢)

GOLD $1,655.50 US (-$6.70)

Natural gas: $3.11 US (-10.5¢)
Dow Jones: 13,390.51 (+61.66)

By the numbers

$4,670

BMO said that the average amount contributed to a registered retirement savings plan in 2011 was $4,670. Putting aside just under $400 a month in a continuous savings plan for an RRSP would generate that amount.

So long Messenger, hello Skype

Those nostalgic for the days of overly personal status updates and usernames with alternating caps may be disappointed by Microsoft's latest move to retire its once-dominant MSN/Windows Live Messenger. Accounts will be migrated over to Skype during the course of the first quarter of 2013, according to a blog post from Tony Bates, president of Microsoft's Skype division. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Speculation

Will Apple make a cheaper iPhone?

A published report says Apple may introduce a cheaper iPhone in an effort to reclaim some of the sales that the company has been losing to less expensive handsets running on Google's Android software.

A story in The Wall Street Journal speculates that Apple could lower the iPhone's price by equipping the device with an exterior that costs less than aluminum housing on current models. Apple Inc. declined to comment. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Take flight. Contest offers trip to space

One Canadian will get the chance to become an astronaut as part of a contest that will send winners 100 kilometres into space.

Contestants from 60 countries will vie for a trip aboard a suborbital spacecraft named the Lynx, a two-seat space plane that takes off and lands as a normal airplane at regular airports. Seats aboard the vehicle usually cost about $100,000 U.S.

By joining the "space academy" at AXEApollo.com, both men and women will have the chance to win one of 22 tickets to travel on the Lynx. Contestants are asked to create an astronaut profile and tell the world why they deserve to go to space.

Two Canadians will win a place at the final stage at the AXE global space camp in Orlando, Fla., with one Canadian getting the chance to shoot into space.

The space camp is backed by Buzz Aldrin, who was one of the first men to walk on the moon. Aldrin will be recruiting the candidates. The final 22 spots will be decided on space-simulation challenges. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Smart fork slows down speedy eaters

Electronics show. New gadget is like having your mother in a utensil

The HAPIfork smart electronic fork is demonstrated at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. The fork vibrates and lights up to help its user slow down to a healthy eating pace. JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

If you've always wanted a fork that spies on your eating habits, you're in luck: A company has developed a utensil that records when you lift it to your mouth.

The electronic fork is one of the gadgets getting attention this week at the International CES in Las Vegas, an annual showcase of the latest TVs, computers and other consumer electronic devices.

The HAPIfork, made by French company Hapilabs, is a fork with a handle containing electronics and a battery. It has a motion sensor, so it can figure out when it's being lifted to the mouth.

If it senses that you're eating too fast, it warns with you with a vibration and a blinking light. The company believes that using the fork 60 to 75 times during meals lasting from 20 to 30 minutes is ideal.

Between meals, you can connect the fork to a computer or phone and upload data on how fast you're eating, for long-term tracking.

Nutritional experts recommend eating slowly because it takes about 20 minutes to start feeling full. If you eat fast, you may eat too much. The fork is also designed to space your mouthfuls so you have time to chew each one properly.

But the fork has no clue about the nutritional content of your food or how big your forkfuls are. It can't tell if you're shovelling lard or stabbing peas individually.

The company is launching a fundraising campaign for the product in March on the group-fundraising site Kickstarter.com. Participants need to put down $99 US for a fork, and it's expected the gadgets will ship around April or May.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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IT'S ALL IN THE GAME — TIME TO MAKE UP

HE SAYS...
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca/voices/he-says

Yes, yes. I'm deeply shocked that people who make a lot of money are greedy, especially professional athletes and corporate owners, two groups that have such a strong record of selflessness.

Now pipe down. The game's on.

I'm unequivocally, unapologetically ecstatic the NHL is back from its four-month lockout. This apparently makes me a sheep, according to many bitter fans and newspaper columnists. Baa, baa, go Bruins.

I suffered as much as the next person — my local bar replaced hockey with '80s karaoke — but I know that any ill feelings will melt away for me as soon as the puck is dropped. Sorry.

If you're still bitter, you at least have some goodies coming your way. The NHL knows it has some making up to do, and has announced a series of initiatives to help win fans back who may be sore with the league. I've obtained a copy of their game plan, highlights of which are printed below.

NHL Fan Redemption Program: Don't Look Back in Fan-ger

Keep the goodies coming

Fans to get premium interest rates for any loans used at games to buy hot dogs and beer.

• "Thank you, fans" messages plastered throughout league will have not one, not two, not three, but FOUR exclamation points, to show it's not hollow. They will be placed not just on the ice but also in other places where they can be easily viewed, such as on the seats in Phoenix.

• Ilya Bryzgalov, Tim Thomas and Paul Bissonnette to lead league-wide seminars on dealing with the media.

• The league hopes to put a positive spin on the work stoppage with a free download of Stompin' Tom Connor's little-heard Hockey Related Revenue Song. ("Hello out there, Bettman and Fehr, it's lockout night tonight. The Make Whole's closed and the pension grows but the NHL's on ice…")

• Fans to get premium interest rates for any loans used at games to buy hot dogs and beer.

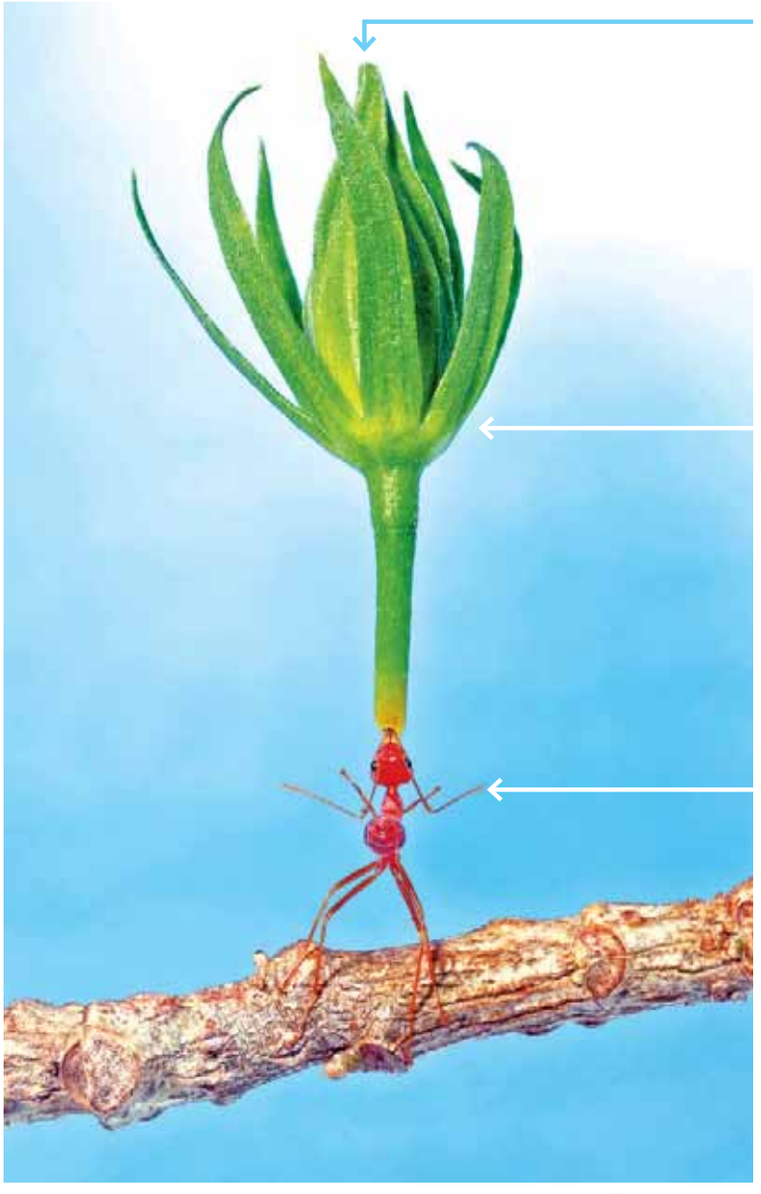
• The NHL will expand further to Corpus Christi, Texas, and Mobile, Ala., so that the current expansion teams don't seem so ridiculous. Other possibilities include Mexico, Japan, and the molten hot core of the earth. Anything but Hamilton.

• Half-price coupons for the season-ticket holders in Anaheim: Specifically, David and Jennifer Boyd of 1058 Sunnyside Ave., Anaheim, Calif.

• Make NHL Centre Ice free, UNLESS revenue is less than $2.2 billion this season, in which case part of an NHL Centre Ice fund will go into escrow, which would then be distributed to Make Whole production costs, provided fans don't decide to file a disclaimer of interest, in which case...

• Gary Bettman leaving NHL to take over NASCAR. His first goal will be to expand the sport into "blue" states and Canada.

Straight from the ant's mouth



Mighty balancing act

Insect shows off towering feat

This red ant puts on a show with incredible strength and balance as it lifts a large flower bud above its head. The insect stood on its hind legs and balanced the green shoot with its mouth as it sauntered across the tree branch. Photographer Lessy Sebastian, 48, spotted the ant near his mom's house in Jakarta, Indonesia. **METRO WORLD NEWS**

This bud's for you

"I got the idea to replace one of the leaves they were carrying with a little flower bud."

Lessy Sebastian, photographer.

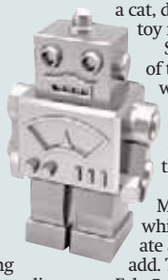
Sebastian intentionally added the flower bud to the pile of leaves the ants were gathering and sat back and waited for one to pick it up.

Ant facts

- **Legendary strength.** A leaf-cutter ant can carry a leaf 50 times its body weight.
- **As old as dinosaurs.** Harvard scientists estimate that ants first arose in the mid-Cretaceous period — about 110-130 million years ago.
- **Population.** Experts reckon ants number up to 10 quadrillion (10,000,000,000,000,000) — more than 140,000 times the human population.

Say your piece

Which token will lose its Free Parking spot?



The gig is almost up for one of the eight Monopoly tokens. But which will it be? Iron? Thimble? Top Hat?

Or another of their board game buddies?

Hasbro is holding a Facebook contest to eliminate one of the eight tokens that identify the players and introduce a new one. Possible new tokens include a cat, diamond ring, guitar, toy robot and helicopter.

So if you are tired of the iron token and would rather be represented by a robot, here's your chance to make those wishes known.

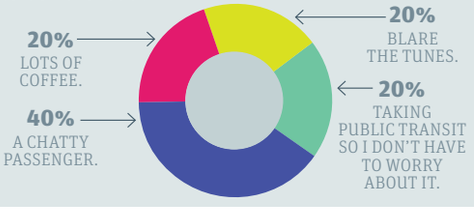
Facebook fans of Monopoly can vote on which piece to eliminate and which one to add. The voting ends Feb. 5.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

One in 24 U.S. adults have admitted to falling asleep behind the wheel. What's your best tip for staying alert on the road?



Twitter

@bgnewf: Seeing Anselmi at #Leafs presser today makes me remember how lucky #TFC is to be rid of him.

@andreacivichino: A lot of tweets about Burke's dedication to causes, etc. It's irrelevant. Question to ask is "what did he do AT work, not outside of work."

@Edward_Chaan: Brian Burke gets fired right when the NHL Lockout ends... #Classic

@theLeafs: If the #Leafs trade away Jake Gardner for Luongo, I may just quit #LeafsNation #NoLuongo

@HabsTalk11: #Leafs GM Nonis apparently really wants Luongo.. Uh oh.. Don't do something irrational.. Like Gardiner or something.

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Manifest destiny: DJs need a constant flow of work

Harbourfront. Randy Reid has been spinning tunes since he was 16, but that doesn't mean he's too proud to DJ at an ice rink

BACKSTAGE PASS
Ian Gormely
scene@metronews.ca

Spinning top 40 tunes to a family crowd isn't what most aspiring DJs consider a choice gig. But the realities of making a living playing and mixing other people's music in the GTA necessitates a paradigm shift in perceptions.

DJ Manifest, who'll man the decks this Saturday night at Harbourfront's outdoor skating rink, should know.

The Toronto DJ, who when not entertaining crowds goes by Randy Reid, has DJed in the city since he was 16, putting himself through college with earnings from gigs.

Reid started his career spinning hip-hop on college radio before transitioning to school parties, drawing on his fellow students for support.

When he started playing small bars downtown, the audience he'd already established followed him from club to club.

"That gave me a platform to start DJing at the Guvernment," he says. "From there it snowballs."

The key to maintaining your momentum is consistency he says, something that comes from playing often. "I would say as a DJ you can't work any less than 5-6 days a week."

Residencies Friday through Sunday pay the rent, but to maintain any kind of lifestyle you'll need gigs Monday through Thursday as well.

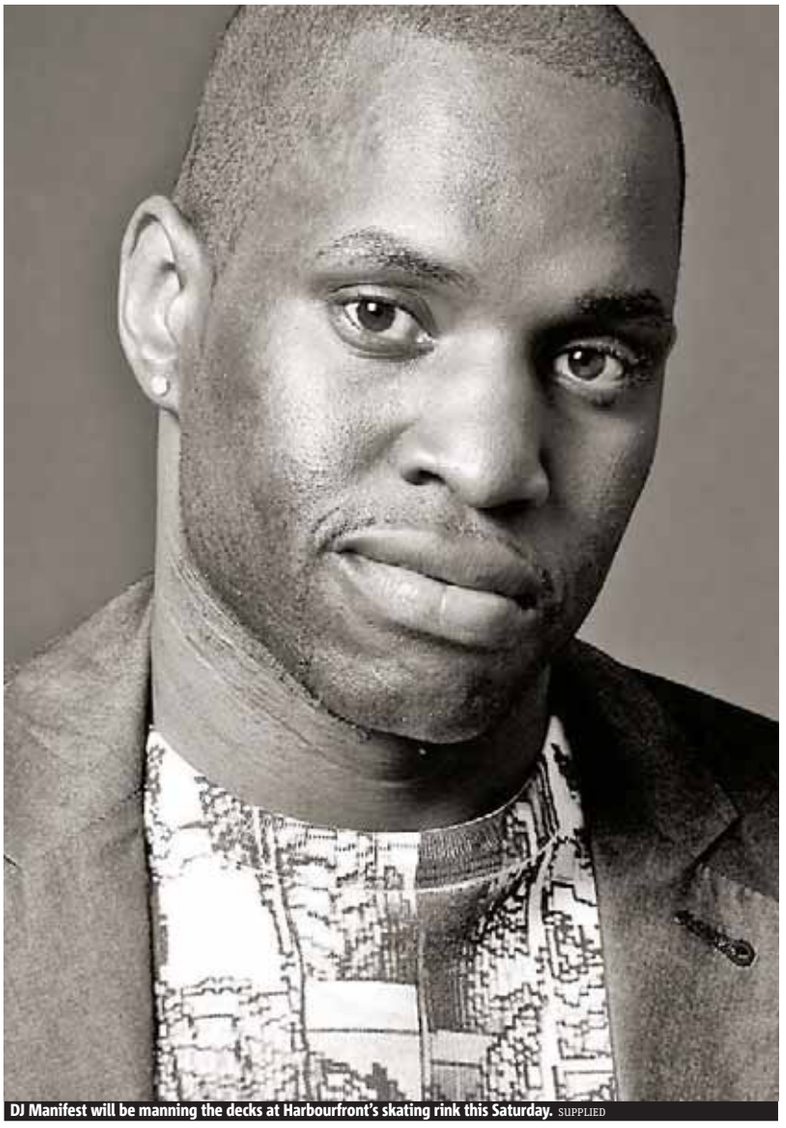
"The more you can diversify your audience, it will help with your longevity," he says. The more kinds of audiences you can cater to, be it hip-hop, soca or rock fans, the better.

Playing the coolest club in town might sound like the dream, but the reality is good paying, regular gigs like the ones Reid plays at Harbourfront are a professional DJ's bread and butter.

Plus they can lead to more work. Reid figures he's received close to 100 referrals through his waterfront appearances. "I'll print up 250 business cards before I go and come back with five."

DJ pool gave artist edge

When Reid started out back in the late '90s, the key to getting the inside edge on the latest tracks was joining a DJ pool. For about $75 every two weeks, members could expect to receive 30-40 new vinyl records from the major labels. The only problem was, membership in the city's two main pools was pretty exclusive. "If you weren't one of those 100 DJs, you weren't getting serviced," says Reid. These days, access is far less of an issue. Rather, it's finding high-quality sounding files. "You hear the difference in a club setting," he says. "It can make or break a DJ."



DJ Manifest will be manning the decks at Harbourfront's skating rink this Saturday. SUPPLIED

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Advertising

Shatner joined by Cuoco on Priceline

William Shatner is getting a new Priceline commercial co-star: Kaley Cuoco of CBS' The Big Bang Theory.

In an upcoming campaign for the online travel services company, Shatner's Negotiator reveals he has a daughter, played by Cuoco. She's been schooled since childhood in the art of — what else? — deal-making, and now is ready to join dad in pitching Priceline.

The 27-year-old Cuoco said Shatner, 81, has made Priceline "cool," but the company wanted to update its message for younger consumers.

Cuoco said she and Shatner taped two spots for the ad campaign that begins Jan. 14. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBC has moved Community back to its original Thursday night time-slot. HANDOUT

NBC noncommittal on future of Community

Network plans. Single camera shows like The Office, 30 Rock and Community could be on the way out after next season

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

When we spoke with Rob Corddry recently, we asked if he'd be popping up again as former legal pal of Jeff Winger (Joel McHale) on NBC's Community, his response was, "Isn't that show done?"

It's a question a lot of people have been asking, especially given recent developments for the beleaguered comedy with a small but fiercely loyal fan base. First, the show's creator, Dan Harmon, left last spring in a less-than-amicable split with the network. Then the show was renewed for an abbreviated 13-episode fourth season, then was taken off the schedule altogether until recently, with the start date changed to Feb. 7. And then last month, series star Chevy Chase announced he'd be departing at the end of the 13 episodes.

While NBC has moved Community back to its original time slot of Thursday at 8 p.m., the future doesn't necessarily look bright for McHale and his co-stars.

"If it did what it has been doing in the past — because it's back in that time slot — I'd be happy," NBC Entertainment Chairman Robert Greenblatt tells Metro. "Does that automatically mean it gets renewed? You know, it's hard to be definitive on any front. But if it does significantly worse than it's been doing, that would be worrisome."

But shows like Community — shot on sets using single cameras — might not be part of NBC's comedy plans going forward. Fellow single-cam shows The Office and 30 Rock are ending this year, and the network already has two more traditional multi-camera sitcoms, Whitney and Guys with Kids. In addition, the network is in the process of remaking Up All Night, starring Will Arnett and Christina Applegate, as a multi-cam.

"I would love to do more multi-cam comedies, and we're developing a bunch of them," Greenblatt tells Metro. "I believe that we have kind of snuffed out a whole farm team of writers and producers who would normally have grown up on a bunch of multi-cams and then run their own shows the way they did back in the day when Friends and Seinfeld and Mad About You and all the great shows were multi-cams. So it's harder to find great writers who can elevate that form, which is now sort of seen as a little bit of the ugly stepchild. That said, we're trying to do more of that."

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Fox chairman happy to escape from 2012

Kevin Reilly, Fox chairman, didn't mince words when giving his assessment of 2012. GETTY IMAGES

Ratings. Network banking on a strong January to return it to the top of the television charts

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

In stark contrast to NBC president Robert Greenblatt's triumphant entrance Sunday, former NBC head and current Fox chairman Kevin Reilly began his network's presentation to the Television Critics Association on a much humbler note, admitting that Fox is "limping our way in out of 2012," he said.

"No one is happier than us to turn the page."

But even NBC's Greenblatt conceded earlier this week that January is traditionally where Fox's ratings come alive, thanks primarily to the return of American Idol, which debuts with new judges Mariah Carey, Nicki Minaj and Keith Urban Jan. 16.

Reilly slams NBC over The Voice

The second season of Fox's latest Simon Cowell-fronted competition, the X Factor, faced some stiff competition from Fox chairman Kevin Reilly's former employer.

"It was slightly on the cheesy side," Reilly said of NBC putting a cycle of The Voice up opposite the X Factor in September.

"It went in the file for later reference."

While numbers for the British import dropped this year, Reilly stayed upbeat. "Pound for pound, I think the X Factor was excellent this year," he said. "Last year, the ratings were a little bit higher, but I think it was a better show this year."

NED EHRBAR/METRO WORLD NEWS

AMC's The Walking Dead drawing the attention of larger networks

Fox chairman Kevin Reilly continually pointed to the success of AMC's The Walking Dead as something the network is aware of and looking to keep up with, especially where Fox's new serial killer drama, The Following, is concerned.

"There have been more violent shows on TV. Clearly there is appetite, people like these things," he said.

"When you put on a thriller, you have to compete at that level. We must match the intensity, otherwise we'll pale in comparison."

NED EHRBAR/METRO WORLD NEWS

Smash. Josh Safran talks about taking over musical drama

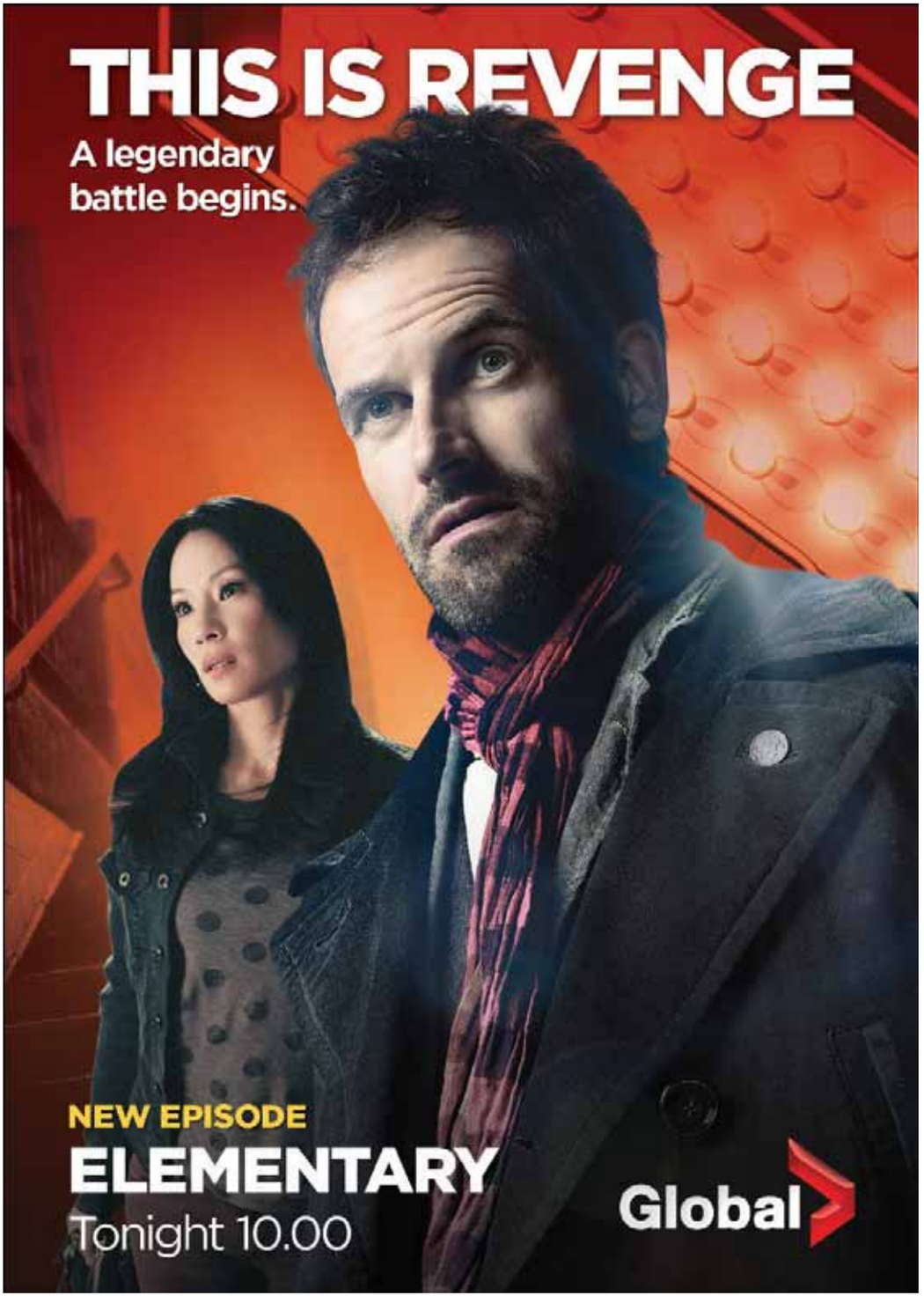
NBC's hit musical drama, Smash, has had just as much drama behind the scenes as on screen heading into its second season, with the Broadway-based show getting a makeover from new show-runner Josh Safran (formerly of Gossip Girl), who stepped in after creator Theresa Rebeck parted ways with the production. Safran spoke about taking the reins and admitted that a show like Smash is bound to have some level of camp.

"I know that's true. I don't approach it to be campy, so if it is it's unintentional. ... There's some fun Sean Hayes stuff coming up (when he guest stars). His character is larger than life, so we knew that we were going to create something that could veer into camp, but it's intentional. So you'll see that, it's really fun," Safran said. "He plays an actor named Terry who is ... sort of like a Robin Williams-y type who is cast in a show he is not prepared ... to take seriously." NED EHRBAR/MWN

Scaling back the camp

"I don't approach it to be campy, so if it it's unintentional."

Josh Safran talking about NBC's Smash



The Carrie Diaries premieres Jan. 14 at 10 p.m. ET on City. HANDOUT

Before Blahniks and Big, Bradshaw had a bestie...

The Carrie Diaries. Canadian actress Ellen Wong is set to get Carried away as the young pal of one of New York's finest

ELIZABETH BEDDALL
scene@metronews.ca

So, much like the young Carrie Bradshaw in your new show The Carrie Diaries (played by AnnaSophia Robb), you've recently been bouncing back and forth between New York City and your hometown (Toronto). Is there a location you prefer?
At this point in my life, I love being in New York. I'm being introduced to an amazing city that oozes with creativity and vibrancy and I'm learning more about myself creatively, being there. And also getting to work on a show with so many amazing people ... I love it.

It's almost like my second home. But Toronto, I always say that my heart lives there. Every time I come back, it's like I don't need to adjust to anything, I'm just home.

In the show you play a young Carrie Bradshaw's loyal, bright and hard-working high school pal Jill "The Mouse" Thompson. Are there similarities between you and your character?
That's one of the main reasons I'm drawn to the show. Because I felt like I related to the character very much. But I also saw a chance to play a character that I never really saw on TV growing up.

I'm playing a girl oscillating between two worlds — she has Chinese parents so her world at home is different than the world that she goes to school and exists in with her friends. So she's trying to find a place that fits for her.

Were you a big Sex and the City fan in its heyday?
I actually started watching the series after we shot the pilot. It was a fun project and I watched the entire series over the summer. It was the best way to watch it because I wasn't having to wait week to week to see what was going to happen next.

Mouse mellows out

"I'd like to see her loosen up a little bit as the series goes on, to just go with the flow."
Ellen Wong

So every girl likes to align herself with a character. Are you a Miranda, Charlotte, Samantha or Carrie?
Sometimes I feel like I always give a different answer because I've thought about it so much. What I loved was that there weren't really the stereotypical archetypes in the show — each of the characters had their own thing but were also very related.

What I really liked about the show was that I was able to identify with each of the characters. And that was similar with the Carrie Diaries. You have all these people with unique attributes but then they also are growing up and trying to figure out their lives together and you can relate to all of them.

Fashion and this franchise go hand in hand. So if Mouse was catapulted to the future and became an actual character on Sex and the City, what would her wardrobe look like?
I think she would have more flair because I think right now she's very conservative and practical. Which is fine and it's who she is now. I'd like to see her loosen up a little bit as the series goes on, to just go with the flow. Maybe soft, silky pieces, but still conservative and closed up ... just a little bit more of a risk taker here and there with more colours and different lines.

At what store would she max out her credit card?
I see Mouse as someone who would end up very worldly, so maybe she would get her wardrobe from all over the world.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Justin Bieber ALL GETTY IMAGES

After another fight Gomez is 'done' with Bieber

Justin Bieber has been having a turbulent 2013 so far, and it may all stem from his failed attempts to patch things up with Selena Gomez. The pair reportedly embarked on a New Year's getaway to Puerta Vallarta, Mexico, but Gomez left before any champagne bottles could be opened, according to Us Weekly. "They had another huge fight, and Selena won't forgive him," a source says of Gomez, who flew home Dec. 30. "Selena is done with him."

Twitter

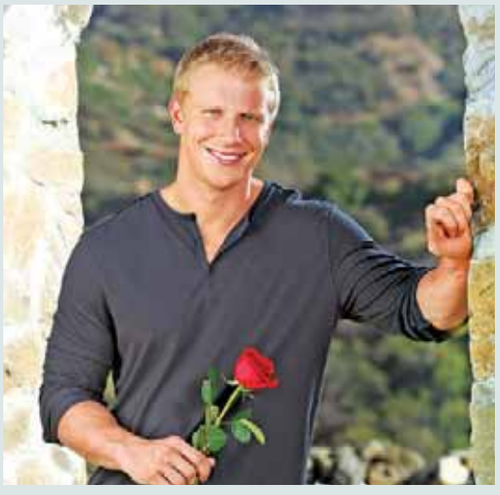
@rihanna
I bet you wanna know what Im all about

@Sethrogen
They may have made a disgusting mockery of news media as we know it, but Fox has put together one hell of a Tuesday lineup.

@RebelWilson
I got dressed in the dark this morning (weirdly, I look better than usual..maybe I should cut off the electricity more often?)

@SethMacFarlane
Just want to point out that the dinner party in "The Hobbit" is the same length as an actual dinner party.

The Word



An opinion on what The Bachelor is really thinking

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

In Touch magazine has "exclusive pics" of the "sexiest bachelor ever" in this week's edition. The mag shows this season's star of The Bachelor, Sean Lowe, with his torso wrapped in a blue towel as he channels his inner Angelina in an undisclosed shower somewhere.

After he covered up, he gave an insightful interview to the magazine. (Just kidding! It was a totally generic chat!) Lowe, who is a former linebacker and works as an insurance salesman, says he is "very hopeful that I'll meet a great girl" on the show. "I would love to get married. I'm absolutely ready for love."

As he whittles down the pool of 26 single, desperate women to his one true love on national television, he has an idea of what he is looking for. "She has to be genuine, want the same things I want, and have a great sense of humour," he says.

Just for once, I wish these guys would speak the truth: "I'm looking for someone who is as fame-hungry yet dim-witted as I am, who will pretend to be my girlfriend for the allotted time our contract spells out. She should also be skinny and look like a professional dancer from Reno. Not eating my arm in my sleep due to starving herself through most of her 20s is also a bonus."

Lindsay Lohan

Lohan's mother blames Lindsay's dad for their daughter's problems

Dina Lohan says all of daughter Lindsay Lohan's problems can be blamed on Michael Lohan being an awful husband. "Lindsay saw her dad abuse me. That's why she's so screwed up," Dina tells the New York Daily News. "She saw a lot of crazy stuff. I want the world to know the root of her problems." Michael, for his part, refutes the claims. "She's bringing this up now because she's drinking and partying with Lindsay," he says. "And she keeps robbing Lindsay. She is the devil."

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Will, here I am!

Oh, this right here?
When Will.i.am. gets dressed, he wants you to notice his clothes — and gadgets too. He talks techcessories, Kanye West and Japanese fashion.

RICHARD PECKETT
life@metronews.ca

Will.i.am's foto.sosho is being marketed as the world's first digital camera and app combination for the iPhone 4s and iPhone 5. It transforms phones into a digital cameras with photo filters, image editing and instant social media upload.
PROVIDED

"It's like warp speed now and BOOM! It's pretty exciting." That's how Will.i.am describes taking his i.am+ iPhone accessory from conception to the shop floor in just seven months. We're sitting in a recording studio in London talking about his love of gadgets and fashion, which, by the way, hasn't gone unnoticed amongst his music pals.

DJ David Guetta describes him as "a bit of a crazy scientist who has difficulty with only doing one thing at a time." So true. Right now, his long list of side projects include appearing as a judge on Britain's version of The Voice, an album with Guetta and a X-Factor-style television show that he plans to release in late 2013.

What were you trying to achieve with the i.am+ project?
Let's take a tourist with their camera and their sense of odyssey, documentation and pleasure and turn this into a cool, wearable camera. It's an iPhone case that actually serves a functional purpose — it's phone, function and fashionology. Personalization, customization and rare oddities are the season right now. You can have anything right now, but what about limitation and exclusivity? You don't want to go all the way Steampunk because Steampunk is like super, super, super, dooper rare. What I mean is, the design has to pay tribute to limitation and functionality.

A lot of celebrities branch out into design and fashion, why do you think it's becoming so commonplace?
You want my honest opinion? Their manager told them that they could make some money here.

Like who?
I don't want to put people under a bus.

What do you think of Kanye West's line?
Kanye, I see his passion and I understand his passion. He's going to figure it out.

Is that your way of saying his clothing line still needs some work?
No, Kanye's game is that he wants to design. He's saying, "I want you guys to see my stuff." That's dope, right? He's not playing the usual (celebrity) game — he's passionate.

Would you buy any of his designs?
Yeah, because I like going for treasures. I want people to say, "Where did you get that?" "Oh, this right here? This is one of Kanye's pieces." I got it. They're conversation pieces.

Speaking of conversation pieces, you collaborated on a collection with the Japanese label Rynshu. How did you discover the line?
I was that guy who said, "Where did you get that? Rynshu? What the hell's Rynshu? Can you text it to me?"

What kind of guy wears Rynshu?
Tech-savvy, fashion-forward people. Invisible tastemakers.

Sounds like you. You've had a few different looks over the years. How do you know when it's time to change it up?
When you see this silhouette (points to himself) out multiple times on people that you probably wouldn't want to hang out with. That's why I hit up Rynshu, Loveless, Verbal and Yoon in Japan. I go to all the little cool spots that are rare enough, so I don't look like everybody else. I need to have some oddities, dude!

How would you describe your look at the moment?
Short in the back, long in the front, draping on top and skinny on the bottom — with big shoes.

THE MAN'S MANY LOOKS

If each outfit were a song, what would Will.i.am call it?

"I'd call that one Ghetto Egypt. It's fit but loose. I like different shades of black and gold. Right now, all the kids are rocking two chains, so I'm rocking five."

BOTH PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

"I'd call this look, Peace. (Laughs) Err, we were being fun and young. No ... no, I wouldn't wear that now."

The Kit

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Halifax

Katie Tower
Graphic designer
Age: 26

What she's wearing
Club Monaco coat, Madewell shirt, Urban Outfitters necklace, H&M skirt, Hansel from Basel tights, Boots from Soula in Brooklyn, Topshop purse.

Her inspiration
"I dress for my mood and the weather. I also take inspiration from blogs and stylish people I see on the street."

THE KIT PHOTOBLOGGER: MEGHAN TANSEY WHITTON, FASHIONEASTHALIFAX.COM

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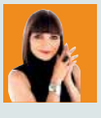

JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

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@Jeanne_Beker: Attention foodies: Feast your eyes on Chef Damon Campbell's scrumptious creation for @shangrilato

@Jeanne_Beker: Some of my favourite old evening bags! Showing off my collection @theloopca Stay tuned...

Prestigious Yorkville living

Look out at fantastic views of downtown Toronto from Chaz condominiums. SUBMITTED

Meet the condo

- **What.** Chaz Yorkville condominiums
- **Builder.** 45 Charles Ltd. and Edenshaw
- **Location.** 45 Charles St. E.
- **Website.** chazyorkville.com
- **Sizes.** From 450 to over 1,200 sq. ft.
- **Pricing.** From the low $300,000s to $2.5 million

The project overview

One of downtown Toronto's prominent condo developments, Chaz soars 47 storeys with an elegant five-storey limestone-clad podium. The illuminated two-storey cantilevered box framed in white concrete on the 36th and 37th levels gives the building a distinct, dramatic look.

Location and transit

An enviable location within walking distance to the intersection of the Yonge and Bloor subway lines. Commuters are not far from the Don Valley and Gardiner Expressway. Cyclists will enjoy many downtown bike lanes. The downtown core is only minutes away.

In the neighbourhood

Chaz is just a short walk to prestigious Yorkville, the Yonge Street strip, University of Toronto, Queen's Park and the Royal Ontario Museum. World-renowned shopping at Holt Renfrew, Tiffany and Co., Cartier, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Hermes, Swarovski and Prada.

Building amenities

A fully-equipped gym with combination yoga and Pilates studio and spinning room. A computer gamers' arena, pet spa, a dining room with wet bar and a billiards room. Two theatres with screening room and sports-viewing room.

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Showing your home? Make sure it's perfect

It takes more than just luck to sell your house. With proper evaluation of both your property and the current market, your chances of success are greatly increased. But many factors can ultimately contribute to a successful showing/sale of your home. Here are five tips you might consider when selling your largest financial asset, from Todd Talbot Host of Love It or List It Vancouver. The show premiered Monday on W Network.

First impressions

Many folks forget the first impression! Even before a buyer sees your home, they need to get through the front door. Make sure that the key and the lock work effortlessly. Don't leave instructions to "pull hard on the door, jiggle the key to the left, then quickly to the right". First question I'd be thinking: "What else is wrong with this place?"

Be prepared

Make sure everyone living at the house is aware when showings are scheduled. The buyer and the Realtor knock, then audibly announce their arrival, but you can't hear because you are in the shower. Wandering out of the shower as potential buyers are wandering down the hall is awkward. It happens!

Appropriate presentation

Ensure the house has an appropriate presentation. False teeth on the bedside table, or a camera on a tripod pointed at the bed tend to draw focus away from the house. Make sure that the house — and only the house — is the most memorable aspect of the tour.

Know your weaknesses

Do you really want to be at the meeting when the offer is presented? Will you be helpful to the negotiations or harmful? Can you control your emotional response? Are you so friendly and chatty that you detract from the process? Know your strengths and above all, know your weaknesses and discuss a strategy with your Realtor. Remember that while your home is your pride and joy, ultimately the sale of that home is a business transaction. And that can be hard emotionally. Your Realtor is a professional who acts on your instructions. Sometimes the best choice is to let your agent negotiate reporting back to you when a decision needs to be made.

Plan the closing day

Pick dates for completion and possession that allow you to seamlessly move into your new home. It's not ideal to have to keep all your worldly possessions in a moving truck for a few days while you wait for your new house. So have a plan in mind that you discuss with your Realtor in advance of receiving an offer.

Cure the winter blahs with Italian-style Onion Soup with Poached Egg

1. In a large saucepan over medium heat, cook the pancetta until it is golden. Transfer it to a plate using a slotted spoon.

2. Return the saucepan to medium heat. Add the olive oil and onions, then cook, covered but stirring occasionally, until very soft, about 20 minutes. Remove the cover and cook, stirring frequently, for another 35 to 45 minutes, or until the onions are golden brown and caramelized. Add the wine and boil until it is reduced by half. Add the broth and simmer for another 20 minutes.

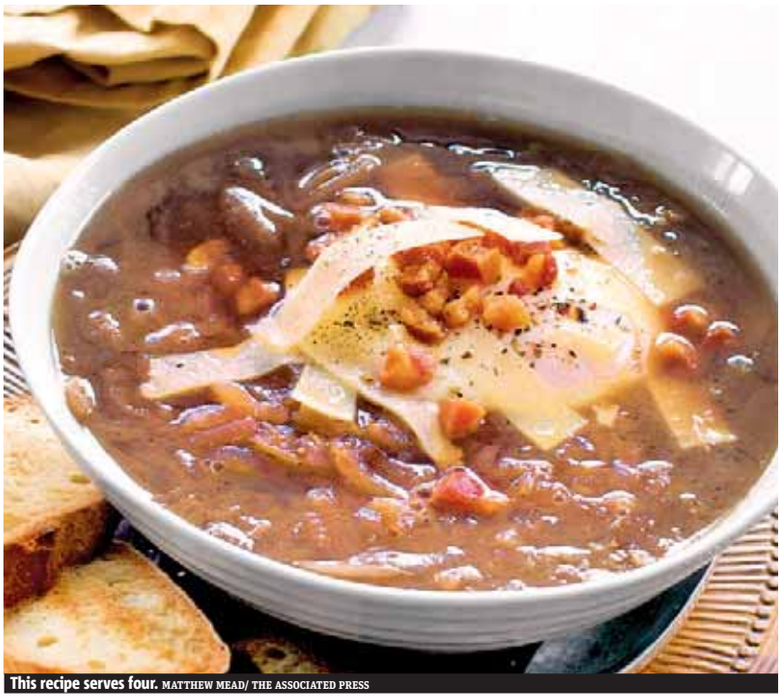
3. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a low simmer. Add the vinegar.

4. Crack each egg into a small glass. One at a time, gently and slowly pour each egg into the simmering water, bringing the lip of the glass right down to the water so that the egg slides in. Depending on the size of your pan, you may need to cook them in 2 batches. Cook for 4 minutes, then use a slotted spoon to lift each egg out (letting excess water drip away).

5. To serve, ladle the soup into 4 bowls. Top each with a poached egg, sprinkle with some of the cheese, some of the pancetta and pepper to taste. Serve each portion with 2 toasts on the side. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ SARA MOULTON, AUTHOR OF THREE COOKBOOKS, INCLUDING SARA MOULTON'S EVERYDAY FAMILY DINNERS.**

Ingredients

- 2 oz chopped pancetta
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 lbs yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1 cup red wine
- 5 cups low-sodium beef or chicken broth
- Kosher salt
- 1 tbsp white or cider vinegar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 1/2 oz Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, finely grated (about 1/2 cup)
- Ground black pepper
- Eight 1/2-inch-thick baguette slices, toasted



This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cookbook of the Week

Foods that will warm you right up

When it's chilly outside, we crave those comfort foods. In Fireside Feasts & Snow Day Treats, you get plenty of warming dishes, including Over-braised Lamb Shanks with Potatoes and Tomatoes, Steak and Blue Cheese Salad, Chicken Pot Pie with Tarragon and Leeks, Hazelnut Cheesecake Bars and more.

The book makes the most of the finest seasonable ingredients, is beautifully illustrated and boasts sections such as: Snow Day Snacks, Cold Day Comforts, Fireside Feasts, Winter Salads, Indulgent Treats and A Cup of Cheer. **METRO**

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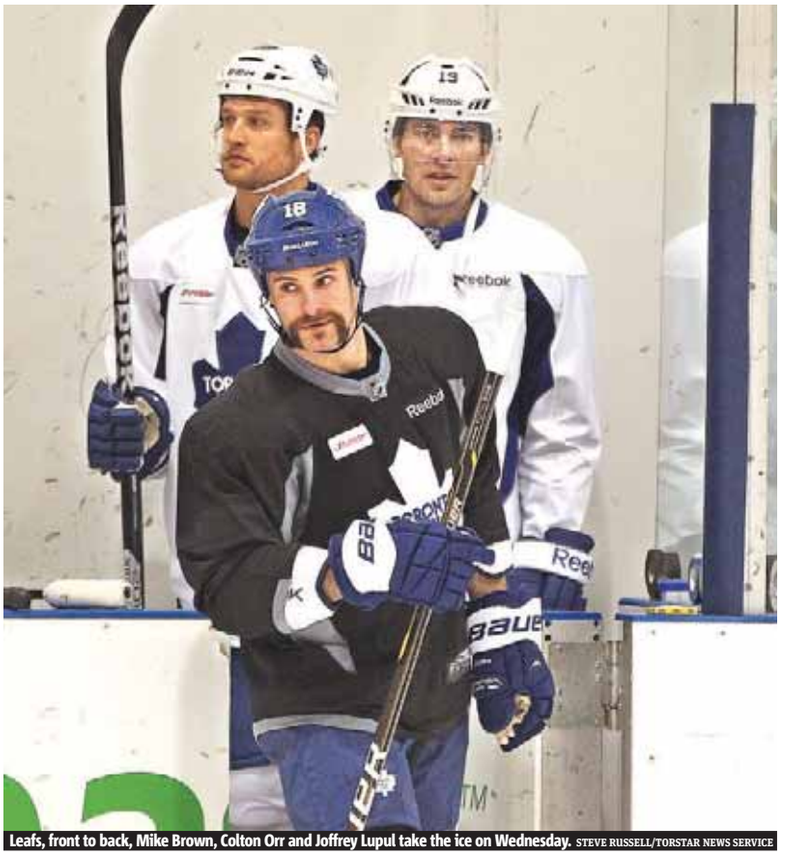
‘We didn’t get the job done,’ says Lupul

Stunned in the locker-room. Winger says players should take responsibility for Maple Leafs’ lack of success, not just Burke



Leafs, front to back, Mike Brown, Colton Orr and Joffrey Lupul take the ice on Wednesday. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Maple Leafs forward Joffrey Lupul perhaps summed up the sudden firing of GM Brian Burke the best.

“We haven’t made the playoffs in how many years? (seven) The blame right now has fallen on the GM but I’ll tell you for sure the players take responsibility,” Lupul said Wednesday just moments after learning the news.

“He’s the guy who brought a lot of us here. We didn’t get the job done.

“It’s not a good feeling for any of the players. Last year we had a coach (Ron Wilson fired) and now the GM goes. It means we’re not getting the job done.”

Lupul was one of the few Toronto players willing to comment on Burke’s firing. Players such as Phil Kessel, Tyler Bozak, David Steckel, Tim Connolly and Clarke MacArthur left the MasterCard Centre refusing to talk to reporters.

“As soon as we sign the deal, I’ll talk,” Connolly said, speaking of the players’ collective bargaining agreement ratification vote expected to start this Friday.

It was a strange scene. About an hour earlier, a dozen Maple Leafs and numerous other NHL players enjoyed an upbeat unofficial practice at the rink in preparation for Sunday’s opening of training camp. Many spoke with the media about the upcoming season without any knowledge their GM would soon be history.

The players learned Burke had been sacked while in the dressing room.

“It’s definitely weird timing,” said forward Mike Brown, among the dozen or so Leaf players who learned of Burke’s firing via Twitter following the informal skate in Etobicoke.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Carlyle OK for now

Dave Nonis, who said there are no plans to remove head coach Randy Carlyle, won’t have much time to prepare. The NHL’s truncated 48-game season is scheduled to begin a week from Saturday.

- “We’re going to have a very short window in order to make some decisions about this hockey team,” Nonis said. “We’re going to focus on that right now.”

Baseball

Voters fail to elect new HOF members

Steroid-tainted stars Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and Sammy Sosa were denied entry to baseball’s Hall of Fame, with voters failing to elect any candidates for only the second time in four decades.

In a vote that keeps the game’s career home run leader and one of its greatest pitchers out of Cooperstown — at least for now — Bonds received 36.2 per cent of the vote and Clemens 37.6 in totals announced Wednesday by the hall and the Baseball Writers’ Association of America, both well short of the 75 per cent necessary. Sosa, eighth on the career home run list, got 12.5 per cent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Humble Bettman says he’s sorry

With the third lockout on his watch finally nearing its end, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman apologized in a “personal statement” delivered to reporters Wednesday in New York after he announced that owners had unanimously voted in favour of ratifying the new collective bargaining agreement.

“To the players who were very clear they wanted to be on the ice and not negotiating labour contracts, to our partners who support the league financially and personally, and most importantly to our fans, who love and have missed NHL hockey, I’m sorry,” said Bettman. “I know that an explanation or an apology will not erase the hard feelings that have built up over the past few months but I owe you an apology, nevertheless.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lateral move reeks of same-old Leafs

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Adam Proteau
toronto@metronews.ca

Out of the blue

“The timing couldn’t be worse and the bewildered look on new GM Dave Nonis’ face suggested nobody in the team’s management structure had a clue it was coming.”

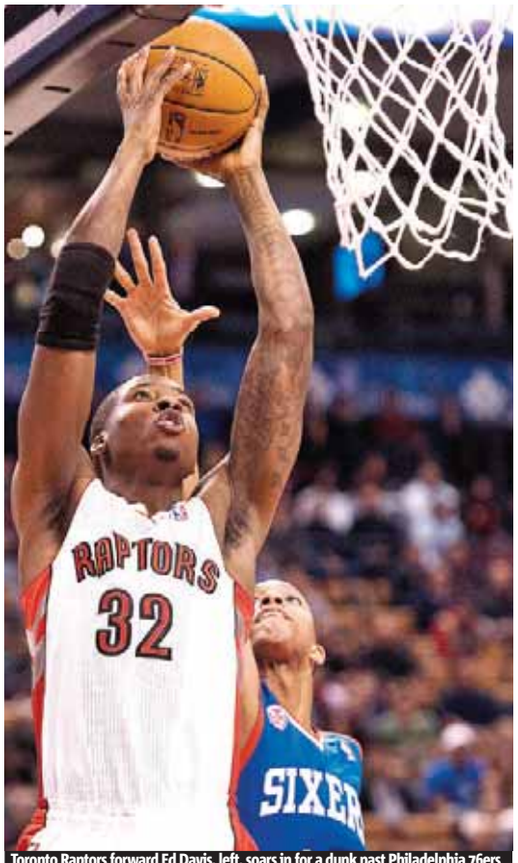
Wednesday’s firing of Toronto GM Brian Burke was, even by Maple Leaf ownership standards, shocking and disturbing. That isn’t to say everything Burke did while holding the Leafs’ reins of power was appropriate; indeed, once he agreed to trade a pair of first-round draft picks for Phil Kessel, he threw away all the cachet he had coming into the job to take his time on a long-term rebuild and wound up chasing his tail (and failing to make the playoffs) each of the four years he was here.

But there’s something awfully odorous about the move. For starters, the timing couldn’t be worse and the bewildered look on new GM Dave Nonis’ face suggested nobody in the team’s management structure had a clue it was coming. Worse, the actual reasons for Burke’s sudden removal were only hinted at by MLSE president Tom Anselmi; he said the Leafs’ new ownership structure didn’t see a fit with Burke’s management style, but wouldn’t elaborate further.

Well, sorry, but such generalities just aren’t good enough — not when your franchise hasn’t made the playoffs for seven straight seasons and particularly not when you fire someone and appoint a replacement who believes in many, if not most of the same things his predecessor did. All it does is confirm the suspicions many have had for years: Namely, that, while nobody doubts ownership wants to get the Leafs back on the winning track, nobody on the board of directors has any clue on how to actually do that.

Good luck to Nonis. He’ll need it to head up an organization whose owners change, but whose impatience and unpredictability continue — and continue to weigh it down.

MLSE president Tom Anselmi was vague as to the reasons for the Brian Burke firing on Wednesday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Toronto Raptors forward Ed Davis, left, soars in for a dunk past Philadelphia 76ers forward Evan Turner on Wednesday in Toronto. FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Raptors listless but victorious vs. 76ers

NBA. Win at home for Toronto launches key stretch of games against Eastern Conference opponents

Wednesday's game

90	72
Raptors	76ers

DeMar DeRozan and Amir Johnson scored 19 points apiece Wednesday to lead the Raptors to a 90-72 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers that ended Toronto's two-game slide.

Ed Davis added 17 points for the Raptors (13-22), Jose Calderon had 14 points to go with 11 assists and Landry Fields grabbed a season-high 11 rebounds and added 10 points. Johnson had a team-high 12 boards.

Thaddeus Young and Jrue Holiday had 16 points each to top the Sixers (15-22).

Neither team could muster much energy through what was mostly a pedestrian affair. The Sixers had an excuse, coming off a 109-89 loss to the Brooklyn Nets the previous night in Philly.

The Raptors hadn't played since losing 104-92 to Oklahoma City at home on Sunday — with a day off and day of practice in between.

The frustration on the part of the Raptors was clear. Calderon's body language told part of the story, while DeRozan hollered at himself as he walked back to the bench after being blocked.

Toronto led for most of the game in front of 15,629 fans at Air Canada Centre and took a 71-61 advantage into the fourth.

The Sixers pulled to within six points midway through the quarter, but that was as close as the visitors would come, as Davis and Johnson teamed up to score what looked to be the Raptors' final five buckets of the game. Fields scored on Toronto's final possession to earn the double-double.

The game was the beginning of a key stretch for the Raptors, which sees them play nine of 10 games against Eastern Conference opponents. Toronto began the night two games behind Philly for ninth in the East.

The Raptors host Charlotte on Friday, then wrap up their homestand against Milwaukee on Sunday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Injury list

The Raptors were short on bodies once again due to injury.

- Rookie Terrence Ross missed the game after spraining his ankle on Sunday.
- Andrea Bargnani, Jonas Valanciunas and Linas Kleiza also sat out.

NBA

Love gone 8-10 weeks due to broken hand

Kevin Love will miss the next eight to 10 weeks after needing surgery to repair a right hand that is broken for the second time this season.

It's the latest major injury to a team that has suffered them all season.

Love missed the first three weeks of the regular season after breaking his hand. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Anthony gets 1 game suspension

Carmelo Anthony was suspended one game by the NBA on Wednesday for confronting Kevin Garnett after the New York Knicks' loss to Boston on Monday.

Anthony, who was angry about Garnett's choice of words during a fourth-quarter altercation, went toward the Celtics' locker room after the game and later waited for Garnett outside Boston's team bus. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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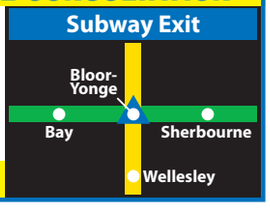

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There is no limit to what you can do over the next few days, but you must have a clear idea of what it is you wish to accomplish. The chance of a lifetime could be heading your way at this very moment.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Listen carefully to what someone tells you today and start thinking of ways you can use this information to make your everyday life more enjoyable. What you do with this knowledge matters more than where it came from.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You have some serious issues to deal with, issues that will determine whether you make a big profit or a big loss. The most important thing is that your aims are realistic. Also, stick to what you are good at.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You are determined to get to the bottom of a situation that has been worrying you for many weeks. What you find may surprise you but it will also help you understand why certain people have been acting strangely.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Pace yourself sensibly today because the planets warn if you don't slow down you could do yourself some harm. If what you put into a task is more than what you get out of it then it's time to stop.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is still a good time of year for you and with Venus now moving through the most dynamic area of your chart romance and creativity are under excellent stars. What does your heart desire most? Go out and get it.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Cosmic activity in the domestic sector of your chart will make it easy to find the words that make a difference when dealing with loved ones and relatives. Always be nice, even when others are not being nice to you.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will turn on the charm today and get anything — yes, anything — you desire. When the mood takes you, as it does now, you know exactly what to say to wrap friends and loved ones round your little finger.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Because you don't like to cause a scene, you may have let someone get away with too much in recent weeks. Now you must get a grip on the situation and make sure they know it was a one-off event.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
People will make a better job of things if you give them the freedom to make decisions. With both the Sun and Venus moving through your sign, you don't have to worry about them getting it wrong.

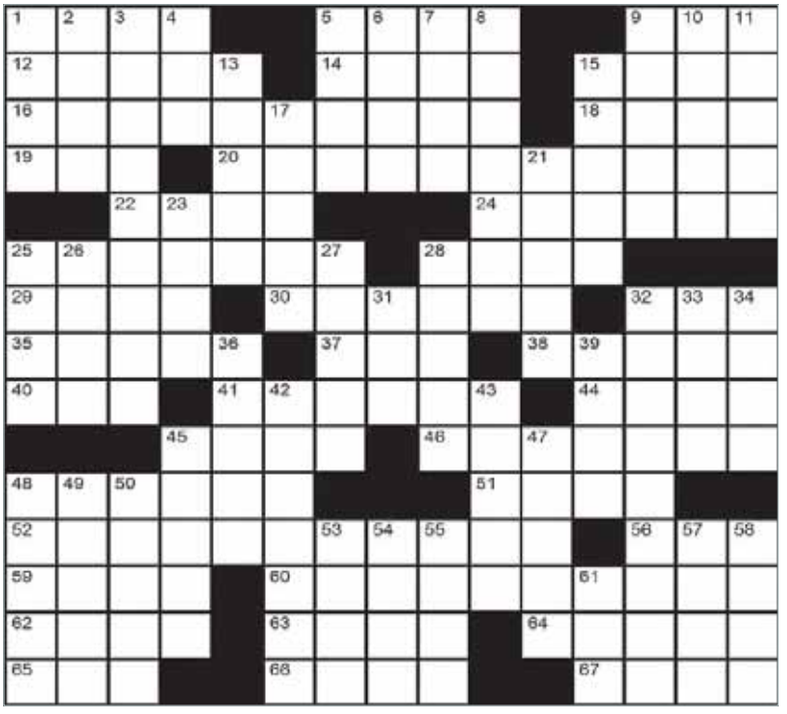
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You must never be afraid to use a few harsh words if you think they are needed, and it seems they are needed now. Partners and work colleagues must be made to realize that you will not be pushed around.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Cosmic activity in some of the more dynamic areas of your chart will give you the energy and the self-belief to put yourself on show over the next 24 hours. Don't worry what others might think – just be yourself.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across & Down

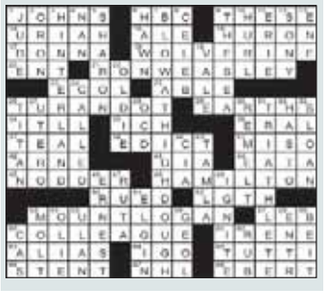
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Peggys __, NS
5. Ottawa-born singer/songwriter Paul
9. 7's phone letters
12. Crunchy
14. Luxury label
15. Character in The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, __ Bones
16. "ET Canada" co-host Rick
18. Capital of Latvia
19. 2-__ tissue
20. "Stompa" is a hit off this Juno-winner's latest album 'Harmony': 2 wds.
22. Ms. MacNeil
24. Good
25. Trend in manicures: 2 wds.
28. Green Gables girl
29. Approx. take-offs
30. Shakespearean verse
32. Angkor __ (Temple in Cambodia)
35. Pool nuisance
37. Pre-__ student
38. Rocker Bryan
40. Affiliation
41. Canadian grocery store chain
44. Diva's vocal
45. Power symbols for Pharaohs
46. Ads-emailed-in-bulk source
48. Maggie Smith's "Downton Abbey" role
51. Nitassinan is their homeland
52. Winnipeg's __ Park
56. French possessive
59. Miss Lane of comics
60. Canadian director David
62. "Before _ __ you go..."
63. $uffix to 'Billion'
64. Heckle
65. Rep.'s political rival
66. Parked cars areas
67. Tori of tunes

Down
1. USSR, to Russians
2. Toothbrush brand, __-B
3. The great victory, and sacrifice, of the Canadian Corps of April 9th to April 12th, 1917: The Battle of __ __
4. Clairvoyance, commonly
5. French aviation pioneer, Clement __
6. Egypt's river
7. City on the Rhein
8. She gave Theseus thread to escape the Minotaur's labyrinth
9. "__ & Prejudice" (2005)
10. Vancouver-born actor Seth
11. Intelligent
13. Penne, for example
15. Actress, __ Dallas Howard
17. Approaches
21. Designer, Oscar de la __
23. Ingrid's "Casablanca" (1942) role
25. "Nifty!"
26. Mythical Hun king
27. Pyramids, pretty much
28. Comic actor Mr. Samberg's
31. Social pages word
32. Canadian __ (Military attraction in Ottawa): 2 wds.
33. Marie-Claire's friend
34. Ivan the Terrible's job
36. German industrial city
39. Rhett's famous word
42. Hakim __ (Eyewear chain)
43. Back
45. Names on it are Brad, Halle, George, etc.
47. Concerning
48. Authenticated
49. River of Brittany in France
50. Susan Aglukark song: "_ __"
53. Vigour
54. Astronomy's __ cloud
55. Chemical suffixes
57. Rubik's Cube inventor, __ Rubik
58. Mil. titles
61. Farm call

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

		7	8		2		9	
5		4	9	6		2		
	9						3	6
6			2		1		5	3
	1			8			4	
4	2		3		9			1
7	4						2	
		6		2	3	4		7
	8		5		4	3		

Yesterday's Sudoku

Today
4°/1°
Mainly sunny

Friday
9°/6°
Rain
90%

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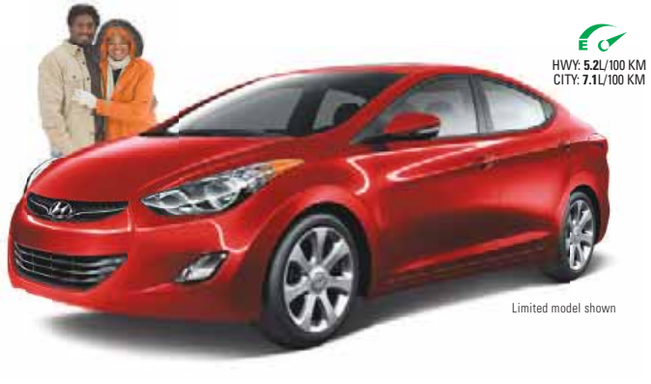

HWY: 5.2L/100 KM
CITY: 7.1L/100 KM

Limited model shown

HWY: 5.6L/100 KM
CITY: 8.7L/100 KM

Limited model shown

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HWY: 6.7L/100 KM
CITY: 10.1L/100 KM

Limited model shown

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